Amendment 2 Special Report

The Softer Voices

by Victor Rivero

Loud voices usually attract the most attention. When it comes to TV and other media coverage of Amendment 2, we've been hearing the loud voices. Organizations. Spokespeople. Radicals.

We went out of our way to find some people who are directly affected by the Amendment 2 issue (they are homosexual), but who maintain a low-profile. Everyday people. The softer voices. What do they have to say about the ruling? How has the issue affected them?

"I'm jubilant," said Margaret Couper, 40, a lifelong resident of the Springs. "It made me feel like even though I knew that Amendment 2 was horrendously wrong, it feels so good to have Judge Bayless agree and tell everybody else this is horrendously wrong."

Others are happy with the decision, but their excitement is tamed by their anticipation of a continuing battle. "I'm leery of what they're (Colorado for Family Values) going to do," said Regina Titadova, 34, a 17-year resident of the Springs.

"They're going to appeal and take it to the Colorado Supreme Court and eventually to the U.S. Supreme Court," said Titadova. "It's been draining to me personally. Initially, when all this was going down, I was politically active. But I've pulled myself out of the political arena. It mentally drained me."

Though draining for some, others believe that the voices raised by Amendment 2 have been a good thing for the gay and lesbian community.

Andrew Gorgey

A Sense of Community: In Denver, *Evans v. Romer* plaintiff Linda Fowler shared the lesbian community's pleasure at Amendment 2's demise.

"Personally, and as a part of the gay community, it has brought us a lot closer," said Lee, who would not reveal his real name. A gay man who has been in the Springs for three years, Lee has a mixed view of how the Amendment 2 issue has affected homosexuals.

"In some cases, we're coming out more, and we're getting together and supporting each other. In other cases, it's driven us deeper into the closet such as in the workplace."

Treesa Priest has been in the Springs since 1981. She lost her job at a local health food store due to her sexual preference, she claims. "I felt discrimination there. First because [the employer was] telling us what to wear. Then they said my 'personal agenda' got in the way."

Priest says that she wants to see a civil rights bill passed on the state level. She believes that Amendment 2 possibly going to the U. S. Supreme Court is "a waste of taxpayers' money."

Though Couper is jubilant about the ruling, the victory is bittersweet. "It has really made me feel sad for this city that my father grew up in and my grandparents grew up in and that all of my children will grow up in," she said. "That this city could be very hateful makes me very sad. But there are always good things that come out of bad things."

> **"[Amendment 2 supporters] don't take care of me. They don't feed me, and they damn sure don't clothe me."**
>
> **– Gay Springs Resident Jimmy Copeland, 62**

Some of that hate is derived from the anger the amendment has stirred in people. "That amendment stinks, OK?" said Jimmy Copeland, a 62-year-old gay man. "It doesn't affect my life at all because I'm Jimmy Copeland, all right? Now, it may affect a lot of gay people. But I'm not the one.

"[Amendment 2 supporters] don't take care of me," said Copeland. "They don't feed me, and they damn sure don't clothe me. Each individual has his or her own right to live his or her own life regardless of who doesn't like his lifestyle or her lifestyle. The gay has been here since day one. The lesbian has been here since day one. What they should be trying to do is to stop this killing of America."

Titadova was overwhelmed by the negative aspects of the controversy. "You're constantly hearing such negative comments that it affects you, and you begin to affect the people around you."

"You tell those *educated* people to wake up and smell the coffee," said Copeland. "They are making the money. They have their living made. I don't care what kind of lifestyle they have. I don't care. They have no right to tell anybody – I don't care how much money they have – how to live."

"I saw Amendment 2 really bringing people together for the first time ever," said Roxie Frank, a 20-year Springs resident. "I know that there has always been a lot of polarization. It created a sense of unity between men and women and the straight and gay communities. People had to go through a lot of bad stuff, but it had a positive effect as well."

At the same time, Titadova believes, "It's not done. They'll just find another way, and we'll have to keep fighting. It's not over by any means."

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EYE ON EDUCATION

As competition for today's tax dollar increases, more people are looking closely at the relationship between expenditures on education and academic results. They ask, does allocating more money for public education increase student achievement?

Studies indicate that when more money is spent on instructional services, there is a significant and positive effect on student outcomes. Also, as the school-age population increasingly comes from a less traditional, more impoverished, and less English-proficient family setting, the payoff from investing in education increases. Adequate funding and efficient expenditure of that money are both necessary conditions for improving public education.

The influence of money can also be reflected in class size. One researcher found that each additional pupil over 18 students caused district academic achievement to fall significantly. Thus, the average performance of a typical fourth grade class of 25 students could be predicted to score a full one third below a similar class with only 18 students.

Further, teachers with more years of experience produce students with higher test scores, lower drop-out rates, and a higher perpensity for continuing their education. Experienced teachers do cost more money than those who are inexperienced. However, when students of these experienced teachers continue their education and become productive taxpaying citizens, we all benefit.

Should we "throw more money" at education, as detractors ask? Research shows that when money is used in areas that directly impact students, it does make a difference in academic results!

Phyllis Wannemacher
President, Colorado Springs Education Association

Drinking Games

Under-age Drinkers Use Bogus State IDs

by Justin Blum

As a recent Friday afternoon turned to dusk, Katie coolly strolled into a bustling northside liquor store.

She made a beeline to the cooler, where she grabbed a case of Coors. It didn't take Katie long to find what she wanted. The 17-year-old has visited before.

Although Katie looks older than her high school standing indicates, she acknowledges that passing for 21 – the legal drinking age – is a stretch. She knew she would be carded.

But when the store clerk asked for identification, Katie pulled out an official Colorado state ID card, complete with her physical description and photo, and someone else's name and birth date. It says Katie is 21, going on 22.

The cashier eyed the laminated wallet-size card, glanced at Katie and rung up the beer.

"It works better than any fake ID I've ever seen...because it's official," Katie says, after being assured her identity and the liquor store's name would not be disclosed. Katie, like the 10 other youths interviewed for this article, did not want their full names used because possessing a fake ID is illegal.

Katie has mastered what is becoming an increasingly popular method of duping the system, according to under-age drinkers and law enforcement officials. She borrowed an older friend's birth certificate and social security card and presented them as her own to state license officials who, for $3.50, gave her an ID. Now she can get into virtually any bar or liquor store.

Youths say bogus state IDs are easier to get than driver's licenses because officials ask fewer questions and require no tests to get IDs.

"Getting a state ID is the number two most prevalent way to get a fake ID from what we've come across," says Kurt J. VandenBoogaard, the state Liquor Enforcement Division's lone investigator for a six-county region that includes El Paso and Teller. The most common method: pulling off a legitimate ID's lamination and replacing the photo.

But there are dozens of other techniques – some sparked by computer technology. Color copiers and computers are used to replicate other states' driver's licenses. And laser printers are used to produce official-looking numbers that are pasted over the legitimate birth date.

Just how common is this? No one knows, because it is impossible to guess how many people with first-rate fakes are never caught. Prosecutors and law enforcement officers estimate 10 to 25 youths are apprehended annually in El Paso County using fake IDs to buy alcohol.

But walk on a college campus in the Springs and most under-age students either have fake IDs or know someone who does. Exchanging production techniques and selling fake IDs is common on college campuses and military bases, according to students and liquor enforcement officials. Why? The youths come from other states whose driver's licenses serve as models for fakes.

Wall of Shame: Coaltrain Wine & Liquor has 41 bogus IDs stapled to the store's wooden shelves behind the cash registers.

Students say getting a fake ID is a priority when they arrive on campus. It allows them to frequent bars, go to clubs and gain popularity by supplying liquor for parties. Some college students make money by producing driver's licenses and selling them for profit. During the summer, two under-age Colorado College students were arrested trying to forge 100 New Mexico driver's licenses.

Youths caught using fake IDs can be charged with felonies and get two year jail sentences. But first-time offenders generally face fines of several hundred dollars – not jail time – and get the felony on their police record, according to prosecutors. ID forgers can face an aiding and abetting charge.

Although bogus IDs are not as prevalent on high school campuses, according to students, teenagers say they would like to have them, because they help liven otherwise dull weekends.

"What do they expect us to do at night?" asked Katie, who bought the beer to take to a friend's party. "There's nothing to do at all here except drink or do drugs. The sad thing is they try to make it harder to drink than it is to get drugs."

Motor vehicle officials from around the country are aware of the forgers, and states are trying to crack down. Some IDs and licenses now feature colorful holograms that are difficult to copy.

Locally, officials at the motor vehicles division of the state Department of Revenue in Denver say there is little they can do. They question suspicious applicants and make them fill out paperwork. Sometimes they catch nervous students.

Beyond that, officials say they do not have the resources to do police-style background checks to prevent people from misrepresenting their identities to get IDs and licenses.

Beginning in February, state officials say a computerized licensing and ID system will replace chemically developed photos. It will eventually allow motor vehicles workers to check a computer record of the applicant's photograph, fingerprints and signature. But the new methods will not be fully functional until drivers renew their licenses and get their photos taken with the new equipment. Even then, there will be no record of out-of-state residents. So, if forgers pretend to be someone who is licensed in another state or not licensed at all, they will be difficult to catch.

"I think this is an improvement," says John Duncan, deputy director of the motor vehicle division. "The new system will certainly tighten up the ability to catch someone."

About 20 states now use the new technology, but the digitized system has not stopped youths from tricking motor vehicle officials. *The Washington Post* reported in August that college students continue to use other people's birth certificates and social security cards to get Virginia IDs, despite that state's use of digitized photos.

John Suthers, the district attorney for the 4th Judicial District, which includes Colorado Springs, says he recently recommended that the Department of Revenue stop immediately giving IDs to people when photos are taken. Instead, he says the IDs should be mailed to the person's home address.

"That would give us a nexus between individuals and addresses," says Suthers, whose suggestion has not been implemented. Youths who get fake state IDs generally list bogus addresses.

Some students in search of fake IDs worry they will be caught by motor vehicle officials if they present bogus documentation to state officials. So these youths make their own IDs or buy IDs from friends.

Dave, an 18-year-old Springs college student, says he and his roommate produced 10 fake Arizona driver's licenses and sold them for $30 apiece earlier this year. The roommates painstakingly created a "board," an enlarged replica

A Bogus Business

David Love never imagined the kind of trouble he would get into when he arrived this summer as a first-year student at Colorado College.

In his first few months on campus, the 18-year-old from Minneapolis got involved with another student in a scheme to produce 100 fake New Mexico driver's licenses. (The *Gazette Telegraph* erroneously reported in August that the students tried to produce 1,800 of the bogus licenses.)

Unlike many, however, Love and CC junior Morgan Mack, 19, were caught. They planned to sell the IDs to other liquor-thirsty students. The price: $30 for friends, $40 for everyone else. Now Love is paying for his deed with more than 100 hours of community service and mounting court fees.

Love says his troubles began when Mack asked him if he wanted to make a few dollars selling the phony IDs. Love went along with it, he says, partially because he respected Mack, who served as Love's residential assistant, a student dormitory leader.

Love says he also wanted a fake ID for himself. "I don't drink much," he says, "but you need one to get into [bars to] hear bands in Denver and Boulder."

Mack was allegedly seasoned in the bogus ID business. Months earlier, he sold 30 forged Washington, D.C., licenses to students who still have the near-perfect IDs, says Kurt J. VandenBoogaard, a state liquor inspector. Mack, whose phone number is unlisted, could not be reached for comment.

To produce the IDs, Mack allegedly got a Colorado Springs print shop to use computer equipment to make an enlarged copy of the licenses and produce laminae with gold Washington, D.C. lettering emblazoned across the front. Mack inserted bogus ages and had other students stand in front of the enlargement – on the photo side of the license – and snapped an instant picture. The result: a perfect imitation Washington license saying the user is over 21.

"If these Washington, D.C., driver's licenses are presented, I would say there's no way you could tell they're fake," says VandenBoogaard.

Mack got away with the D.C. licenses. But when Love joined him this summer to return to the same shop to make the New Mexico IDs, the store's owner called the police. Since then, the two students have been to court and admitted their scheme. Now, prosecutors say the students face at least $2,500 in fines, community service and two years' probation.

"I thought this would be easy to do," says Love, "but it turned out to be the dumbest mistake."

– Justin Blum